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FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND PROBLEMS

By CLYDE EAGLETON



American Council on Public Affairs
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American Council on Public Affairs

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FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND PROBLEMS

By Clyde Eagleton

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The state is the creation of individuals. It exists for no other purpose than to serve and advance the interests of individuals. Primarily, it was designed to protect life and property against violence, but its usefulness has developed in many directions; today the state not only protects by prohibition, but affirmatively advances the interests of its members. In order to achieve these purposes, it has been necessary to endow the state with immense powers. The purpose of the state is not to wield power, but to secure justice; the state is a means and not an end in itself. It has long been a subject of debate whether the state better serves the interests of its members by greater or less control over them; but for many hundreds of years, men have believed that they have a right to the expression and development of their individual capacities to a degree limited only by the same rights in other individuals. This conviction can be traced back through ancient law, through all the political philosophies, and through the great documents of human advance such as Magna Charta, the Constitution of the United States, and the Covenant of the League of Nations.

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The sovereign state, then, is not a final institution, *ne plus ultra*; it is the agent of those who compose it. In its external, or international, relationships it must equally keep before itself the objective—the function—of serving its members. While the state has a long tradition of power behind it, and while it is able to command intense loyalty from its members, there is little doubt that these members would substitute for it another system if they were convinced that the state was not satisfactorily serving their interests, and that another system could do it better. For this very reason, the state has gone through various transformations during its history. It has long been true, and continues to be true, that the external relationships of defense and conflict between states have enabled each state to develop its power over its individual members to a degree much greater than they would like; they have assumed that the preservation of national existence and independence of action was

essential, and have therefore submitted. It has also been true that intercourse between states has not always been regarded as of vital importance, though desirable; each state, therefore, could be self-sufficing in its care of its own members.

The inquiry which now faces us is whether these conditions which have for so long prevailed are still governing, and whether the institution which has long been regarded as the final form of human organization is now competent, alone, to care properly for the interests of its members. It must be kept in mind, always, that the objective is the welfare of the individual human being.

* * *

During almost the existence of the American nation, the effects of the Industrial Revolution have changed the life habits of all peoples. In the course of this period, the world has gone through the most amazing changes which history records; and the direction of the affairs of this nation, as of all others, has been as inevitably affected by these changes as, for example, our domestic life has been affected by electricity or the automobile. In the field of business and industry, the American has recognized the importance of these changes, and has adapted himself to them with an ingenuity and efficiency which has commanded the admiration of the world. But this same citizen, progressive in his own field, has in foreign policy moved little beyond Washington's Farewell Address. He has substituted automobiles for horses, elevators and escalators for stairs; he adopts new ideas and machines at great expense, as when the talkies supplanted the silent movies. He has not, however, carried this foresight into government; he has not inquired whether these changes necessitate improvement of the state as the agent for promoting his interests. It is undoubtedly true that the interests of the individual are today better served by the assurance of peaceful intercourse and efficiently organized trade between nations than by the isolation and unlimited national sovereignty of the past. This follows from the changes above mentioned, resulting in an interdependence between the peoples of the world, which makes it impossible for any one nation to shape its destiny alone.

The most striking of these changes is in the reduction of the size of the world. Recent studies show, according to the figures of Professor Eugene Staley, that "the world is now actually smaller, measured in traveltime, than were the thirteen original states that united to inaugurate George Washington in 1789." Any important city in the world can now be reached within fifteen days; the distance from Mount Vernon to Russia can now be covered in less time than was required by George Washington for the trip to his inauguration; it formerly required as many weeks as it now requires hours to cross

the Atlantic Ocean. The communication of information has become practically instantaneous, so that an American can sit in his own home, before his radio, and hear Hitler's words even before they reach the audience in the Sportpalast at Berlin—since electrical waves travel faster than sound waves. The transportation of goods and persons, the exchange of information, has now become so rapid and so reliable that people in one part of the world may ordinarily depend upon another part of the world for the supply of their needs. When some extraordinary circumstance, such as war, interrupts this flow, much suffering results; it is of the highest importance that communications, because of and through which individuals in one part of the world can and must depend upon individuals in another part of the world, should be maintained in such fashion that all parts can be efficiently served, and so that it shall not be in the power of any one state to interfere with this flow. A stoppage of traffic is one of the greatest dangers of modern life.

All types of persons are affected by this interdependence. Business has learned that much of its prosperity depends upon what happens outside its own state.¹ To some peoples, such as the British, foreign trade is so vital that if it were cut off for a few weeks, the nation would starve; to all, even to the self-sufficing United States, this commerce is of great moment. The foreign trade of the United States is only five or ten per cent of its total trade, but this is a very important percentage. In some industries, it represents the margin of profit; if this margin were taken away, the industry might collapse, prices might have to be raised, unemployment might be increased. More important, some industries could not continue without these small but essential imports from abroad. We could not have the telephone, or automobile, or quick-drying paint (at least, in their modern development) without such indispensable imports as tungsten or rubber or tung oil. Neither would the citizen who likes his coffee for breakfast cheerfully accept an interruption of foreign trade. There are much broader aspects of the situation to be noted. The economic depression which has so badly hurt Americans in the past decade was due in its intensity to the First World War and to other international forces. The problem of competition has become much more complicated: it is difficult for an individual American or even a particular industry to compete with the organized national economy of a socialist regime such as Russia or a totalitarian regime such as Germany or Japan.² Aside from this situation, which may or may not be temporary, technology has brought about changes which demand a wider market than that within any one nation. The

¹ Cf. Richard Schueller, "New Methods of Trade Policy, in *Problems of Post-War Reconstruction*.

² See Douglas Miller, *You Can't Do Business with Hitler* (1941).

American automobile industry can pay higher wages than others because it has a market large enough for mass production. How much more might it do—and other industries similarly—if there were a world market unhindered by national restrictions? The mere mention of such a prospect indicates the problems of international division of labor, of international supervision and administration.³

Again, no nation or people today can feel sure of being able to maintain the value of its money through its own unaided efforts. National monetary standards have long been measured in terms of gold; today, there is much perplexity over the accumulation of gold in the Kentucky vaults of the United States. If other states have no gold, they may base their currency upon something else. Indeed, most currencies are now managed by the government which issues them, with repercussions upon all other currencies. Would we gain by having one international currency, controlled by an international institution, and not subject to manipulation by states?⁴ International lending and investment have broken down badly. The American people have been learning that we cannot expect to be repaid the money which we lend unless the borrower can sell his goods, and that he cannot sell his goods if our markets and other great areas are closed to him. It is obvious that, in the business and industrial realm, a state is incapable of safeguarding the welfare of its people single-handed; there must be some international stability, and toward this each state must contribute.

This is true in other fields as well. No one has been more affected by the growth of international interdependence than the farmer, and he is beginning to realize that fact. The development of transportation made it possible for him to sell abroad, and thus to increase his market and therefore his production; but the result is that his sales now depend upon international competitive forces. The price of his wheat may hinge upon a snowfall in Russia or a rainstorm in Argentina. When the cotton farmer began to plough under his crop in order to raise its price by making it scarce, Japanese and Indians and Brazilians and others began to plant more cotton in order to take advantage of these higher prices—which means that the situation is beyond his control, and beyond the control of his government. The cotton farmer, indeed, would be wrecked if his foreign market were taken from him. Government now faces the necessity of regulating the production of the farmer internally; but it knows that such domestic regulation cannot escape the external factors—that internal planning for the farmer depends upon international

³ Cf. Lois MacDonald, "Economics and Politics in Reconstruction," in *Problems of Post-War Reconstruction*.

⁴ Cf. George S. Hirschland, "The Gold Problem and the World Scene," *ibid.*

planning for agriculture. To the individualistic dirt farmer, not yet prepared for regulation by his own government, it is a shocking thought that his future is to be determined by planning on a world-wide scale; yet that is the solution which faces him, for neither he nor his state can solve the problem themselves.

Similarly, the position of the laborer, which is closely linked to that of business, must be affected by international factors. Competition with foreign goods raises questions of wages and hours of work; high tariffs have not been able to protect him from this competition. Indeed, as a consumer, he may object to a tariff on goods which he uses, and prefer to buy them from abroad if they are less expensive and suit his purposes. He is caught in the same situation as business: he is part of our national economic system, but that is part of a world economic system. He may not even be able to get national legislation to protect his health, except through international agreement; in the match-making industry, for example, it required many years of negotiation before enough states would prohibit the use of poisonous but cheaper phosphorus in the manufacture of matches, so that any one state could afford to do it. If the laborer seeks to improve his position, he must work toward that end in the whole community of nations, and not merely within his own state; he may find that while he is complaining of the low standards being imposed upon him within his own borders, he is seeking to maintain a higher standard as compared with laborers elsewhere, and that they may be as resentful of his greed as he is of the avarice he charges to the employers in his land. His problem, too, requires an international solution; efforts to solve it have indeed sought to cut across national frontiers and to make labor a horizontal force throughout the world, rather than units cut by the vertical lines of states.⁵

Of great importance is interdependence in the intellectual and scientific realm. Science and knowledge have always been international, and all humanity has profited thereby; one need only think of what electricity, in its numerous manifestations, has meant to mankind. An idea from one part of the world, a discovery from another part of the world—put them together and we have the automobile, the radio, modern aviation. How much longer would the process take if each people had to think out for itself each step in the development? Modern economy and life and happiness depend upon such interchange of information; our civilization could not nearly have reached its present stage if ideas and discoveries had not been able to move freely from one country to another. There is appearing today a tendency, doubtless due to current economic strife

⁵ The International Labor Organization makes such an effort. See Francis G. Wilson, *Labor in the League System* (1934).

and to the insecurity in the ever-present threat of war, for each state to keep for its own exclusive use such contributions to human advancement as appear within its boundaries. But if the purpose of furthering the welfare of the human being is to be served, this nationalistic restrictiveness should be halted; instead there should be the widest international arrangement for the spread of such knowledge.

And finally, at the foundation of every human society, determining its character and shaping its conduct, lie moral principles and religious beliefs. While these may vary as between peoples, many of them are universally accepted. They are, however, difficult of application in the novel and complicated situations of the modern world, and there is much uncertainty and dispute. Even in this field, interdependence is felt, for no law, in the community of nations or elsewhere, can establish order unless there is some common respect for the moral principles upon which that law is founded. No law will be respected, nor can it be enforced, unless there is a general belief in its justice, and a willingness to make sacrifices in order to maintain it. "Much of the success of the totalitarian challenge," says an English authority, "is due to lack of clear thinking, of moral courage and unity of will in the West." It is to organized religion that human beings have looked for guidance in this field, and they must still do so. But the church, too, has been caught up in the maelstrom; it does not know how far it should support national sovereignty, and how far the universally accepted principles should be applied to states. The moral foundations for human society cannot be laid by each national sovereignty according to its fancy; all peoples must have an interest in them.

This interdependence is the most striking characteristic of our time. Its pressure as between individuals within a state has led to frantic calls for more and more governmental intervention and thus to a greatly widened range of governmental activity. As between nations, its pressure has of course been slower, but by now its effects have become devastating. It is naturally felt least by the strongest and most self-sufficing states, but all are severely affected by it. The present upheaval in the world, which is much more than war, derives from the maladjustments which this pressure has produced, and it offers an opportunity for rebuilding in more appropriate adjustment after the conflict is over. And from this international interdependence and its effects one lesson can clearly be shown, though states are reluctant to accept it: that national sovereignty is no longer enough. No nation can live of itself in these days; each is forced, in varying degrees, to depend upon parts of the world not under its control. A state is unable, in some cases, even to maintain its national existence without aid from the outside; certainly, it cannot provide properly

for the economic security and the general welfare of its citizens except through intercourse with other nations.⁶

It follows that there must be agreement and cooperation among states, for without that spirit, the necessary intercourse could not be carried on. This has long been recognized, and there have been general rules of international law as well as a generally accepted etiquette; more recently, occasional conferences were held seeking agreement within specified fields. These steps, however, were insufficient for the complex and continuing problems which have been cumulating; an occasional conference or treaty could not carry the load. In certain fields within which this pressure of interdependence was felt most heavily, like that of communications, international administrative institutions were established, such as the Universal Postal Union. These administrative units recognized the fact that the problems were continuing ones, for which continuing machinery must be set up. They were few, haphazardly established, and have proved inadequate; but they have demonstrated their worth in the areas in which they operated. Similar machinery was needed in other fields, such as that of economic intercourse, but states have not been willing to surrender to an international authority the necessary control in these fields. The creation of the League of Nations was a recognition of the need of a central system, coordinating the various scattered agencies, and providing a useful clearing-house. It made an excellent start, and it is probably correct to say that the machinery of the League for administrative purposes (excluding political) has proven itself indispensable, and that it, or something like it, will be continued.

None of this, however, was enough to avert the present catastrophe. The whole of it represents the scanty result of concessions made by reluctant national sovereignties, unwilling to grant what was necessary. The hard fact must be recognized that national sovereignty is no longer sufficient in itself, and that human beings must seek outside the state for an instrument more capable of caring for their needs. In this situation, the state cannot regard itself, and should not be regarded by its members, as the supreme and final authority, since it cannot even assure its own existence, much less provide properly for the welfare of its members. It is faced with the same development which led to its own creation, that is, a situation in which men were forced to ask whether they should continue to maintain individual liberty at the cost of interminable strife and friction, or whether they should submit to a common law and establish institutions which would serve all mutually. The latter alternative has

⁶ As to the effects of interdependence, see Eugene Staley, *Raw Materials in Peace and War* (1937), and *World Economy in Transition* (1939). For a more theoretical approach, Gottfried Haberler, *Prosperity and Depression* (1940), Chap. XII.

been the answer always accepted by human beings, and it is the inevitable answer for the community of nations.

Some slight progress had been made in the direction of satisfying the needs created by increasing interdependence; further headway must remain impossible, and even the maintenance of previous advances will be most precarious unless some barrier is set to the expanding range of modern war.

War itself has been affected, and its consequences vastly increased, by the same principle of interdependence. A century ago, a war could be waged by a comparatively small professional army, and only that small part of the population which happened to lie in the path of battle would be touched by it. It was then possible for international law to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants; it is no longer able to do so, for modern war must be backed not only by a few men who can shoot guns, but by the whole economic power of the state, and every man, woman or child may be called into war work. They may, therefore, be regarded as combatants, and subject to attack; it is a grim joke in the warring countries today that the family at home is in more danger than the soldier in the trenches. When modern war comes, there are few who may be left to carry on the ordinary pursuits of peacetime; practically all persons are now diverted from their predilections and occupations into the destructive activities of war.

Formerly, too, destruction was not so great. It was the purpose of the enemy to destroy the uniformed manpower and the military fortifications, and private property was only incidentally liable to destruction. Since practically everything is of value in making war today, virtually any object, as well as any person, becomes a legitimate target. A factory, a railway junction, a power-house—these are now as important as a fort was a century ago. The battlefield is no longer limited to the few acres in which opposing armies meet; a barrage sweeps across the entire width of Belgium and France, and the range of airplanes is unlimited. Upon the sea, the old rules which safeguarded merchant shipping have lost their meaning, and every vessel, neutral or not, must take the chance of being sunk without warning. New weapons, such as the submarine and the aeroplane, have enormously increased the destructive power of war, and have left far behind them rules of international law for the humane protection of individuals. And such new weapons as propaganda and terrorism strike not at material things, but at the heart and the spirit and the mind; their purpose is to break the morale, not of a few soldiers in uniform, but of a whole people.⁷ Thus the scope of injury of war is

⁷ Edmond Taylor, *The Strategy of Terror* (1940)

enormously widened; indeed, it reaches to all persons and all things, and even to the mental and spiritual nature of man.

In order to wage such a war, a state must organize its whole internal economy and political organization for the purpose. Railways and factories must be located, not where economic values would be served, but where military considerations dictate. Certain industries must be magnified in their operations, while others must be discouraged. Finance and exchange must be controlled so as to give to the state adequate money for external purchases, for it is another characteristic of modern war that no state can carry on without help from the outside; no matter how such measures may conflict with traditional or sound economic methods and principles, they must be directed to the compulsions of war. The state may find it necessary to ration food, or gasoline, or clothing, or other things; it will undoubtedly interfere with the freedom of the individual, perhaps calling upon him for his life, perhaps diverting him into another occupation, perhaps even curtailing his freedom of speech or movement. A government at war not only has the opportunity to take dictatorial power, but is constrained to do so; the task calls for centralized direction, immediate decision, the suspension of established rights. Persons who would ordinarily object bitterly to collectivization, to interference with constitutional prerogatives, to the overthrow of accustomed democratic processes, submit meekly to this rigid control in time of war. They recognize that their nation could not otherwise hope to win, and to win emerges as the supreme purpose. If they were willing to make a much smaller sacrifice during peace, they might not have to face war; one of the lessons of the present is that peace and happiness for the individual should be the predominant goal of man, and that it can be achieved in ways other than war. That lesson has not been learned, and the unavoidable result is that individual liberty and security suffer, and that political ideals must be immolated as ruthlessly as personal property or individual freedom of action.

Even more impressive is the fact that these measures, these hardships, must be imposed far in advance of a declaration of war. The types and numbers of weapons required today are much more extensive than in the past. A rifle-maker, working individually, might be able to turn out one gun in a few weeks; to manufacture the millions which are now needed is possible only through mass production. This, swift as the process is once it is set up, requires years of preparation in assembling material, planning and making the tools and machines, building factories, and training skilled workmen. Granted the speed of invention in war weapons, which makes some of them obsolescent before they can be put to use, this equipment must be kept in opera-

tion during what was formerly called peacetime; to wait until war breaks out would be disastrous, and it would be unthinkable to scrap these systematic preparations only to revive them hastily and at extravagant cost when the threat of war again appears. By the time the war comes, a nation must have made itself self-sufficing for the period of the conflict, for it may not during that period be able to obtain the materials which it needs from the outside. War interrupts communications and blocks supplies and, as already remarked, a stoppage of traffic is disastrous in this interdependent world. Therefore, since the possibility of dearth exists, a state may feel that it is necessary in time of peace to acquire by conquest territory containing certain resources, so as to have within its actual physical possession the things which it needs. It is often asserted that the struggle for raw materials leads to war, but it is more accurate to say that it is war which leads to the struggle for raw materials. As a result of this necessity for long and widespread preparation in advance of a possible conflict, nations must remain almost as thoroughly organized for war in peacetime as after hostilities are declared. Thus, in the future one may never be able to think along lines of peace; instead all mental energy will function in terms of totalitarian organization for war. And thus, too, humanity may be forced to shape its resources and intelligence for destruction rather than for the improvement of life.

The range of war has widened not only in duration but also in radiation. It is no longer confined to small armies within limited areas inside the boundaries of belligerents; it is no longer even restricted to the belligerents themselves. It spreads like a forest fire. Its sparks fall upon neutral peoples, who suffer almost as heavily as the warring nations. The neutral may be compelled to put himself upon a military footing at a burdensome cost; he must seek to defend his position as a non-participant, for interdependence and far-reaching weapons make the neutral part of the strategy of war. His resources may be essential to a neighbor belligerent; his geographical location may offer a means of approach to the enemy; his weakness may tempt the belligerent to make use of him. Even if not attacked, the loss to the neutral may be as great as if he were actively involved, and the net result of his faithful adherence to impartiality and peace may be to render him so feeble that even independence disappears. War has become so huge, so explosive, that it can no longer be confined within national boundaries; other states are pulled into the vortex, either in innocent helplessness, or in order to defend rights and existence against the belligerent who finds that he can wage his campaigns more successfully by making use of the neutral. Here again is the result of interdependence and industrialization which

makes it impossible for a state to fight a war alone; he must suck in resources from the outside, and the flood of war which he has started spills over into other lands. From the viewpoint of the community of nations, it must be noted that this weakness on the part of small or unprepared neutrals is dangerous to all; indeed, the experience of Norway and Belgium and other small neutrals in the present conflict has raised the question whether such states can be permitted to continue an independent existence, lacking protection against attack. War now constitutes a grave danger to the whole community of nations, and its price must be paid by all, whether or not they were responsible for its outbreak. The theory of the past, still angrily asserted in the United States, that a nation can by an exercise of its own will "keep out of war," is no longer true. When the fire of war starts, it sweeps before it all who sit back and refuse to fight it.

As a result of these changes in the character of war—and it must be reiterated that these changes are themselves due to the changes in life brought about by international interdependence and technological advance—the cost of war must be measured upon a different basis. It appears, of course, in the billions spent upon armaments and upon the upkeep of large armed forces; because of the greater number of persons involved in warmaking and the wider field of operations, the cost is enormously heavier than in the past. The destruction caused by the newest weapons is worse, and as for the task of reconstruction after the war, it is only necessary to think of rebuilding London to find an illustration. The dislocation of modern business, in every nation, means damages never known before. Astronomical as this price may be, what is even more shocking is the fact that a substantial part of it must be continued even after the guns cease to roar. It will be much harder than before to recoup the losses of war, for not even neutrals now make a profit out of war; moreover, even when a so-called peacetime returns, the diversion of economic effort from lucrative production to war waste will have to go on. Finally, there are new costs which cannot be measured in terms of money. The weapons of propaganda and terrorism, the attack upon entire populations, the constant drive to wear down morale and break the backbone of popular resistance, means incalculable injury to the spiritual and mental strength of a nation, and to the moral foundations of civilization. If war is not banished from the world, then those concepts upon which human progress has thus far been based must be cast out. In their place will come forms of government and political philosophies to perfect what has already begun—the organization of mankind for destruction rather than for social advance.

The community of nations is in a desperate situation today. Peoples have become so dependent upon each other that if the intercourse between them were cut off or conducted without efficiency and reliability, some could not survive and all would suffer. The regulation of this intercourse cannot be left to individual nations. If each state is to be permitted to exploit the accident of its location or the special advantage of its resources, or to set up barriers and interruptions to the necessary interchange between peoples, the states suffering from such action will seek by reprisals or by force to secure what they regard as justice for themselves. The intercourse between states must be a matter of community regulation, and it must be fairly administered. The problem is, of course, a difficult one. Even as between individuals within the state, it has not been satisfactorily adjusted; but there the problem has at least been recognized. The same thing must happen on the international plane through the formation of continuing agencies of adjustment, invested with power to compel the recalcitrant. Certainly no one would seek to defend the haphazard methods of the past which, within a generation, have brought forth a profound economic depression and a second world war.

However, granted the utmost cooperativeness between states, it would still be impossible to establish an adequate system so long as the threat of modern war, totalitarian in its administration and universally pervasive in its effects, is allowed to remain. The reasons for this have already been pointed out. War has always been regarded as extravagant in terms of finance; its cost is now so great in terms of human life and endeavor as well as in economic resources that humanity cannot support it. The fact that any one nation may make war forces every state to be prepared for such an eventuality, and this means that it cannot be cooperative; it must be selfishly nationalistic and self-sufficing. We have reached a point at which a state can no longer rely upon the uncertain agreements and understandings of the past; it cannot afford to depend upon such a system so long as war may disrupt its communications and leave it helpless. It cannot disarm or cease its military preparations until it is assured that there will be no more war; this means that it must enslave its citizens, tie them to the chariot of war, direct its national efforts toward wasteful manufacture and destruction instead of toward prosperity for human beings. Ordinary business cannot give its undivided attention to its own future, toward satisfying the economic needs and raising the standards of life of its clients; it must be diverted to war production, and gird itself against the interruptions that will come when actual hostilities begin. Thus the imminence of war tends to dominate the political, social, and economic life of nations; political organiza-

tion passes into the hands of military rulers and economic welfare becomes secondary; the community of nations has no solid foundations of common interest. Such conditions the community of nations cannot alter so long as war is permitted to survive.

This insecurity and uncertainty is brought home to us by the dilemma of the United States in the world today. The American people are disposed to look with indignation upon the holocaust into which one state, or even one man, has thrown the entire world—though, as a matter of fact, they cannot completely evade responsibility for the situation which produced this catastrophe. They are inclined to think that they should be free of the consequences of this war, though they are aware that they cannot escape unscathed; they show no indication of planning for a future system which might prevent the recurrence of such a crisis. Yet the results of this situation will mold their destiny for years to come, whether or not they take part in the shaping. If it should be assumed that Germany will defeat those opposed to her, there would be no community of nations, and no possibility of establishing a stable system within it, except through the domination of Germany in the world; and since no one power has ever been able to dominate the globe, there would doubtless be continuous disorder and revolution, not to mention the possibility of open struggle between the United States and the rest of the world. If the war should end in a stalemate, or if Germany should be defeated, and nothing more were done, democracy would confront totalitarianism, private enterprise would collide with national enterprise, and again the danger of war would be constant. In that event, the effort to cope with totalitarian competition and with the necessity of unrelaxing preparedness would overwhelm democracy and individualism; the exigencies of the international situation would demand the sacrifice. Thus, even though a war were won at great cost by the United States, her position would be little improved if she rested content with mere military triumph. Only by annihilation of the opposing system, or by organization of the community of nations so as to prevent future war, could the United States hope to maintain her democracy and to live in the way to which she has been accustomed. But the former alternative must be discarded, for such a course would only bring new ideologies and fresh rivals. What must appear is a continuing system, ready to make the necessary adjustments and possessed of authority to maintain order.⁸

The fact that such an attempt proved a failure makes no difference; there is no other solution. In this interdependent community of nations, order and stability are vital. To achieve these requisites, war

⁸ Cf. Oscar J. Falnes, "The Future of the Small States," in *Problems of Post-War Reconstruction*.

must be eliminated, just as the use of force between individuals has been eliminated. This is neither ideal nor unreal; it is the unavoidable consequence of what has been said above. Despite the formidable price, we have been able to endure war in the past, but we cannot hope to assure the welfare of the individual under the conditions of modern war. It is not beyond the capacity of man to bring war under control. If past efforts have failed—and they were not very sincere efforts—the reason for these failures should be investigated, and new efforts made. No cost can be too great, for the continuation of war means the wreck of human progress, the ruin of human endeavor.

War is so ancient an institution that it is difficult to conceive of the possibility of eliminating it from our life. For long it has been regarded as a visitation of providence which could no more be avoided than could earthquake, fire, or plague. Man has succeeded, however, in protecting himself to a large degree against those phenomena; today, we can as confidently hope to protect ourselves against war. For war is not to be explained as an outburst of such human feelings as rage or hate or revenge; while these emotions may play a small part in producing war, they appear rather after war has begun. War is a huge and costly enterprise, to be waged for the achievement of certain aims, and only after long and careful consideration. Nor is it fought merely because of an instinctive human desire to fight; that instinct, insofar as it exists, can be satisfied in other ways; modern war does not offer the opportunities for glory and personal heroism which have produced the legends of the past. Even aerial battles are now organized and mass action. We recognize, today, that war is simply a weapon, a tool, which may be used for good or bad ends just as a gun may be. Our problem is to seek out the good purposes, and to find a better and less expensive method of accomplishing them.

The logical fault in the war system consists in the assumption that each state may be its own judge, and may therefore carry out its decisions by force; the result is that might prevails, a conclusion long rejected by humanity in other fields. Justice must be the objective, and justice is conceded to be a community determination. No human being, individually, is permitted to decide what is justice as between himself and another, and to enforce this decision by his own strength; but the state, which has long been regarded as the ultimate in organization and authority, has claimed for itself this right, and been unwilling to submit to the community judgment. Naturally, it collides with other states claiming the same right, and war frequently ensues. Today, as nations grow more and more dependent upon each other, there are more and more conflicts, and the community of nations approaches the same crisis which produced the organization of the

state. There comes a time when these conflicts become so recurrent, so destructive, that those engaged in them are aroused to wonder whether there is not a more rational solution; reluctantly, but compelled by the pressure of circumstances and induced by intelligent consideration, individuals have surrendered some of their personal liberty to a central authority which undertakes in return to prevent the use of violence and to administer justice. National sovereignty, like individual liberty, is a precious possession, to be guarded and watched over; but it cannot exist if it is permitted to go so far as to infringe or destroy the corresponding freedom of others. The proud boast of the United States that she has complete independence of action in all circumstances becomes under the conditions of today no more than the right of any state to pull us into war, or to produce a situation in the community of nations injurious to us, without a chance on our part to say a word about it. It is obvious that national sovereignty is not and cannot be unlimited; it certainly cannot assure the welfare of its members by its isolated action; it may not even be able to maintain its existence unless protected by the law and strength of the combined community of nations.

Granted, however, that national sovereignty is insufficient under the conditions of today, no state can afford to relinquish it—and with it the right to make war—unless a substitute is provided which can accomplish the ends which war has long been called upon to serve. Some of these purposes may be condemned but others are essential; and war will remain until there is devised a satisfactory means of fulfilling those requirements. There must be a means of settling disputes, a means of enforcing rights, a means of remedying wrongs. Thus far, war has been the arbitrament upon which human beings have relied for the performance of these functions, indispensable in any society; it is surprising that humanity has so long accepted a method so inadequate and costly. Its defect, as we have just seen, is that it concedes to each state the right to determine justice for itself; it follows that this right must be replaced by a more impartial authority operating in the name of the community of nations.

Force, thus far, seems inevitable in human affairs. Granted that the great majority of individuals or states are habitually obedient to law and are willing to respect the rights of others, there are always a few prepared to employ force, and they must be met by force. The religious pacifist hopes to counteract violence by spiritual influences, but his following is not nearly strong enough in the world today to lend optimism to such a solution. If force is not taken over by the organized community, and applied in behalf of all its members, it will be used by those who have their own purposes. The dilemma of consent or conquest is the problem that confronts the community of

nations today in its most concrete form. The community must choose between agreeing upon a combined use of force for the protection of all or witnessing the application of power by some state for its own selfish ends. The dilemma is a desperate one, and its very danger raises the hope that peoples will seriously consider the new situation which has been thrust upon them, and ask whether national sovereignty can longer be accepted as the best means of advancing their human welfare.

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This analysis shows the necessity of central administrative and legislative machinery for the community of nations, backed by overwhelming physical force, and prohibiting the use of coercion to each of its members. The alternative is anarchy, leading to friction, and preparing the way for conquest. The system must be one which can offer a substitute for war in the settlement of disputes, in the provision of justice, in the maintenance of rights. The functions are so interrelated that all must be performed; a complete system of international government is called for, and nothing less will serve. Attention has been concentrated upon the provision of an international force to prevent war; but it must be stressed that it is of equal, if not greater, importance that the international government have the power to make changes, even without the consent of those involved, which assure greater justice as between its members. The point calls for emphasis, since it has been disregarded in the past; nothing is so certain of collapse as an effort to maintain the *status quo*, an attempt to stand athwart the inevitable march of progress. No state can be expected to give up its right to make war unless it can be assured that the community of nations, through established organs and procedure, is ready to hear its complaints and to remedy them.⁹

It is beyond the scope of this essay to attempt a blueprint of such a system. The scheme entails many difficulties, and will require much study and experimentation. Two chief obstacles—equally dangerous—will hamper the quest for such a system; these are defeatism and perfectionism. It should be understood that a perfect plan cannot be supplied; it should be likewise manifest that the formulation of a course offering great improvement and hope for humanity is not beyond the range of human intelligence.

Let us return to the statement of principles with which we started. The purpose of political organization, and including such an international structure as now seems needed, is to further the well-being of the individuals under its control. Throughout history the individual, in his search for welfare, has tried many forms of organization, endowing them with power over himself; at times, he has seemed

⁹ Clyde Eagleton, *Analysis of the Problem of War* (1937).

to deify this authority which was his own creation, and to regard its support as the chief end of man upon earth. Always, however, when this power is used to his injury, or when it proves incapable of meeting his needs, he has turned against it and modified or rebuilt it so that it could better serve him. He may forget for a time, or be misled, but always he returns to the fundamental idea that the state, or other political body, was created by him for his welfare.

Such a time now presents itself to us. Over all the world, individuals are dissatisfied with their position and seeking to improve it. Revolutions have occurred, some of them upon a mighty scale, such as that which established Communism in Russia. Germany and Italy have sought to answer by setting up totalitarian regimes; others have imitated them in varying degrees so that dictators and one-party systems became widespread. The democracies look upon such aberrations with suspicion and distrust; yet even among them, and in those states where the greatest prosperity has been found, there has been unrest. The English, with characteristic common sense, have gradually made changes, in response to complaints, which better assure the welfare of their citizens. In the United States, where until recently there has been such an abundance that there were few grievances, but where more discontent has now arisen, President Roosevelt has endeavored through the New Deal to save the old system by making some necessary alterations.

What forces lie behind this world-wide surge of change and revolution? What are the protests and desires of the individuals responsible for it? The great revolutionary movement of a century and a half ago sought liberty for individuals. The state had become too much of a power in itself; authority was concentrated in too few hands, and without recourse; the agency which had been created by individuals to advance the welfare of all, had come to limit and exploit them for the selfish purposes of a few. There was no room for the expression of personality, for individual enterprise, for progress toward the goal of human welfare. The state was refashioned, and during the nineteenth century, liberty was accentuated. The rights of the individual became the watchword, and government was suspected and restricted to such an extent that it could not serve the people in the many new difficulties of that period. With this emphasis arose the tendency to overlook the responsibilities and duties of citizens; those who possessed wealth felt little sense of obligation toward the community as a whole, or toward their less fortunate neighbors. It was a period of expansion, when new territories and resources were being developed, and when a man could move westward if he were not pleased with his job; it was a period when a living could be had without assistance from or dependence upon others.

During the same period, however, were occurring the mighty changes, sketched above, which have reversed this favorable position. There are now no more frontiers in the sense of undeveloped land to which one can go and gain a livelihood by himself. The frontiers to be conquered today are no longer physical; they are the frontiers of science, of social organization, of the brotherhood of man. Technology, industrialization, communications, division of labor—these and other new forces have more and more limited the ability of the individual to stand upon his own. Liberty of thought and speech, freedom of enterprise and political rights in general, while highly cherished, do not now seem relatively so important. A man cannot clothe his family in the Bill of Rights or feed them upon civil liberties. The individual is now caught up in a system; his inability to make a living is no longer necessarily his fault, as recent unemployment has taught Americans. The need of the individual today is not so much liberty as economic security, and this the state is failing to provide. That is why the world is being wracked by discontent and demand for change. The state, the agent of the individual, is not serving his needs satisfactorily.

For this there is a variety of reasons, but conspicuous among them is the new problem of the external relationship of the state to the outside world. Interdependence does not stop at national boundaries; the individual depends not only upon persons within his own borders, but also upon persons in other parts of the world. These parts are not under the control of the state, and its ability to protect the welfare of its own members steadily diminishes. It cannot control the international forces which lead to depression and unemployment within its own territory; it cannot curb—indeed, in its present attitude, it encourages—the use of war which plays such havoc with individuals. In the regulation of these international currents, each state can claim only a share; it cannot, as within its own confines, assert supremacy. It may, if it wishes, seek to exert its will by force; the consequences of modern war have already been noted, and it is clear that this is not the road by which the welfare of the individual can be secured. The national economy has become part of a world economy, and over this no one state can preside.

In the task of reconstruction which must be faced as soon as possible after the present conflict, it must be recognized first of all that the sovereign state, so long regarded as the ultimate in human organization, is insufficient for the purpose for which it was created, and that new and broader agencies must be constructed to further human welfare; it is a lesson which particularly needs to be brought home to Americans, who have not yet felt the full weight of this pressure, and who are still inclined to think that they can live unto themselves.

The creation of such new instruments does not imply the disappearance of the state, which must still remain the unit of the community of nations, and which will doubtless constitute the foundation blocks of the community for years to come. It does mean, however, that the state can no longer claim to be the final authority in all fields; in a world which has become interdependent and which must reckon with modern conditions of war, the state has lost the capacity to fulfill its original purpose. Unless the state recognizes this situation—which means that the individuals who have hitherto admitted nothing beyond the state must now be prepared to acknowledge its fatal shortcomings—further political advance becomes impossible, and even the maintenance of past gains is rendered precarious. If the welfare of the individual is to be served, if economic security and social progress are to be achieved, humanity must find a better agency than the state.

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